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Unjust Imprisonment

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Two Ohio men sentenced to life sentences for rape but exonerated by DNA evidence will be part of a panel discussion on unjust imprisonment at 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 23, at the University of Dayton School of Law.

Robert McClendon and Raymond Towler will discuss their experiences during "Unjust Imprisonment and Beethoven's Opera *Fidelio*." The event is free and open to the public.

The tie to *Fidelio* refers to Beethoven's 1805 opera about a devoted wife who struggles to free her wrongly imprisoned husband from an oppressive rule.

Neal Gittleman, music director of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor of *Fidelio*, and Kathleen Clawson, stage director of the production, also will be on the panel.

Margaret Karns, University of Dayton professor emerita of political science, will moderate the discussion.

McClendon earned his release in August 2008 after a joint investigation by the Ohio Innocence Project and *The Columbus Dispatch* led to his exoneration. He had spent 18 years in prison.

After nearly three decades in prison, Towler was exonerated in May 2010. For years, Towler and the Ohio Innocence Project sought DNA testing in the case, and the fourth round of testing finally proved his innocence. Towler was one of the longest-serving wrongfully convicted persons in U.S. history, according to Mark Godsey, director of the Ohio Innocence Project and University of Cincinnati College of Law professor.

The Dayton law firm of Freund, Freeze and Arnold is sponsoring the event, which Dayton Opera, the University of Dayton School of Law and the University of Dayton department of political science are presenting. Other organizations providing support include the Ohio Innocence Project, National Conference for Community and Justice of Greater Dayton, the Dayton Council on World Affairs and the Dayton International Peace Museum.

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